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1962/11/03

G/PM

November 3, 1962

TO: S/P - Mr. Walt W. Rostov

FROM: G/PM - Raymond L. Garthoff

SUBJECT: Dissent to One Proposition in the "Soviet Scenario for Post-Cuban Negotiations with the US"

I feel I should record my dissent to one important proposition contained in the "Soviet Scenario for Post-Cuban Negotiations with the US" which you submitted to the Executive Committee of the NSC on November 2. I participated in the work of the group chaired by Mr. Harvey which prepared the paper, though other urgent commitments prevented me from attending all of its meetings. I am perhaps enough detached from this paper to be permitted the comment that I think it is a very useful, imaginative, and generally sound analysis.

The proposition to which I cannot agree is stated in paragraph 4 of page 2 and the corresponding paragraph II, I, on page 5. It is stated that the Soviets believe that they must increase their strategic strength "at the most rapid rate possible," and that they will not permit themselves to be diverted from that task by any other considerations or developments. As a corollary, it is stated in paragraph 5 on page 2 that the only alternative to such a proposition would be general and complete disarmament.

This view is not in accord with the judgments of the National Intelligence Estimates, but I am concerned here only with expressing my strong personal reservation. The Soviets are doubtless interested in improving their military position, and if feasible would like to attain military superiority. However, they have not in the past, and I do not believe will in the foreseeable future, make this objective overriding and absolute. Many important political and economic considerations and competing demands prevent them from pursuing military superiority as the priority task. Moreover, there are many indications that the Soviet leaders recognize the futility of attempting to match or surpass the United States in existing weapons systems. The intelligence estimates show, on the basis of all sources, that the Soviets have not

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to ~~have~~ pressed a military buildup "at the most rapid rate possible." The Cuban venture represented a gamble to redress their military inferiority by a quick and easy gambit. I do not, however, believe that we can infer from their failure to win a single long-shot chance that they will dissipate their whole bankroll on the race.

General disarmament is not the only alternative. A continuation of efforts by familiar political, economic, and military means to advance the position of the USSR according to opportunities which offer the best returns is much more likely. It is important that we continue to make the military path unpromising. By assuming that we do, as we have been, there is, in my view, no reason to suppose that the Soviets are compelled by an unreasonable compulsion to subordinate all other considerations to a single-minded pursuit of the chimera of military superiority.

cc: G - Mr. Johnson
S/AL - Mr. Thompson
G/FM - Mr. Kitchen
S/P - Mr. Harvey

G/FM:KL:artha:ff:pep

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